

Today's News - Friday, April 23, 2010

- We lose JFK's architect who Huxtable called "the architect who has done the most to bring a new design frontier to Washington."
- Glancey glowers at what the meaning of "world class city" has become: it's "lobotomized urban planning" that "spells architectural bombast, bling and banality."
- Phifer's North Carolina Museum of Art West Building is "itself a subtle, even sly work of art...a paean to the light."
- An eyeful of some of the alternative designs for the U.N.'s East River site; it reads" like a lost history of mid-century architecture" (great slide show).
- 3XN's new "spiky" bank HQ on a "sleepy" Danish island "smells better than its name" (it "bleeds green" too).
- L.A. County's Natural History Museum to plant a new front yard, the "most ambitious merger of architecture and landscape in California" since Piano's green roof in San Francisco.
- Hood wins competition to design an "electric landscape" (i.e. a 5,000 solar panel-studded park) at the University at Buffalo (finalists Hood, Acconci, and Balmori designs on view at Albright-Knox this weekend).
- A bit more on the dissolution of gm+ad, "credited with pushing back the boundaries of Scottish architecture with their bold and provocative designs."
- Building Awards 2010 winners announced.
- Weekend diversions:
- Kennicott minces no words about Pei documentary: "It is a terrible film" with "not a single critical thought in its head."
- Farrelly on Ford's film "A Single Man": it shows "there is emotional meaning in architecture" in Lautner's "lovely, unlivable house" (and not so much meaning in other modernists' abodes).
- Woodward is wowed by film portions of Christo and Jeanne-Claude's "The Running Fence" show at the Smithsonian in DC: "I can't be alone in feeling patriotic about a country that allowed such an unlikely and lovely thing to exist."
- Levinson's slide show essay on a new public art project at a solid waste facility in Phoenix that highlights "post-consumer detritus - a.k.a. trash."
- "Fast Trash" features Roosevelt Island's pneumatically driven underground garbage disposal system - with hopes it will "serve as an example for urban planners elsewhere."
- A bamboo jungle that you can climb grows atop Manhattan's Met Museum (built by rock climbers, no less!).
- Frederick Fisher's watercolors, on view in L.A., "underscore the architect's use of drawing and watercolor as a creative practice" (lots of pix!).
- "Glass Ceilings" in Richmond, VA, is "meant less to contest past gender perceptions and more to honor those women who have made a strong impact" in architecture.
- UB students' "Living Wall" is a "community of pods" that visitors can climb on, over, and through.
- Page turners: Kristal's "Re:Crafted" includes 25 architectural projects that "challenge the traditional view of craft"; and "Roadside America" is Margolies's photographic tribute to a "vanishing vision of over-the-top architecture, automotive freedom, and the American dream" (great pix for both).

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Obituary: John Carl Warnecke, Architect to Kennedy, 91: ...was the court architect of the Kennedy administration and the designer of John F. Kennedy's grave site at Arlington National Cemetery...Huxtable: "the architect who has done the most to bring a new design frontier to Washington." - New York Times

'World class' just means banal: Swedish architects are learning to fear this relentless form of urban blight...lobotomised urban planning... "World class cities" spells architectural bombast, bling and banality. By Jonathan Glancey- BD/Building Design (UK)

The new North Carolina Museum of Art opens up: NCMA West Building is itself a subtle, even sly work of art. Inside and out, it is a paean to the light...luminous pavilion, luxurious with glass... -- Thomas Phifer and Partners; Edward Durell Stone (1983); Lappas + Havener [slide show]- Independent Weekly (North Carolina)

Plan B for an East River Site: The many alternative designs for the United Nations site read like a lost history of midcentury architecture. -- Sloan & Robertson (1925); Wallace K. Harrison (1946); Nikolai Bassov; Le Corbusier; Oscar Niemeyer; Liang Ssu-ch'eng; Howard Robertson [slide show]- New York Times

Middelfart, a New Building by 3XN, Smells Better Than Its Name: A spiky new Middelfart Savings Bank headquarters that bleeds green...on the sleepy Danish island of Fyn...the building consumes just 30-50% of the energy it otherwise would. -- Olafur Eliasson [images]- Fast Company

Ultimate Front Yard: Major new landscape for Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County will double as exhibition space...\$30 million, 3.5-acre project...the most ambitious merger of architecture and landscape in California since...the completion of Renzo Piano's undulating green roof at the rebuilt California Academy of Sciences in 2008. -- CO Architects; Mia Lehrer + Associates [images]- The Architect's Newspaper

Electric Landscape: Walter Hood fuses solar array into new University at Buffalo open space: ...prevailed over finalists Vito Acconci and Balmori Associates in an invited competition to design a 5,000 solar panel-studded landscape installation that will provide electricity in housing for more than 700 students. [images]- The Architect's Newspaper

Abrupt end to top architects' partnership: Gordon Murray and Alan Dunlop are credited with pushing back the boundaries of Scottish architecture with their bold and provocative designs...the practice was now "moving on" -- gm+ad- The Herald (Scotland)

The best of the best: Building Awards 2010 -- Rick Mather Architects; Edward Cullinan Architects; Alford Hall Monaghan Morris (AHMM); Pollard Thomas Edwards; AECOM; etc. [links to images, info]- Building (UK)

"Learning From Light: The Vision of I.M. Pei": It is a terrible film...It has not a single critical thought in its head. Its script proceeds breathlessly from cliche to cliche, and it fails even as good hagiography. By Philip

How modernism simply led us down the garden path: People are always trying to make architecture mean something. Trying to show skyscrapers cause crime, or density generates slums or beauty civilises...But there is emotional meaning in architecture...as Tom Ford's "A Single Man" shows...[he] prefers his innocence glamourised, so his film is as elegant, and as lacking hinterland, as Lautner's lovely, unliveable house. By Elizabeth Farrelly- Sydney Morning Herald

A California Dream Come True: "Christo And Jeanne-Claude: Remembering The Running Fence" [in Washington, DC]...conveys the utopianism, nerve, luck, grass-roots organization, horse-trading and lawlessness that led to one of the few successful and popular works of American environment art...I can't be alone in feeling patriotic about a country that allowed such an unlikely and lovely thing to exist. [slide show]- Wall Street Journal

The Art of Solid Waste:...a slideshow of photographer Paho Mann's images of post-consumer detritus - a.k.a. trash - part of a new public art project at a solid waste facility in Phoenix, Arizona. By Nancy Levinson- Places Journal

Whoosh! The Trash Can as a Pneumatic Tube: "FAST TRASH: Roosevelt Island's Pneumatic Tubes and the Future of Cities" exhibit on Roosevelt Island's pneumatically driven underground garbage disposal system hopes to serve as an example for urban planners elsewhere. -- Juliette Spertus; Project Projects [slide show]- New York Times

A Jungle of Bamboo Is Growing Atop the Met: "Big Bambú: You Can't, You Don't, and You Won't Stop"...Where once there were uninterrupted vistas of the city's skyline and Central Park, there are now thickets and elevated walkways...a perpetual work in progress...part performance, part architecture and part sculpture. -- Doug and Mike Starn [images]- New York Times

"Frederick Fisher: Thinking by Hand": ...exhibition of new and recent watercolors explores the form making process and composition strategies...underscores the architect's use of drawing and watercolor as a creative practice during the initial steps of understanding a new commission. [link to images]- Edward Cella Art + Architecture

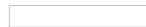
"Glass Ceilings: Highlights from the International Archive of Women in Architecture" at the Virginia Center for Architecture in Richmond...represents an effort to combat the perceived limitations for women to excel in a field historically dominated by men...meant less to contest past gender perceptions and more to honor those women who have made a strong impact on the field.- Collegiate Times (Virginia Tech)

UB Architecture Students' 'Living Wall' Goes Up in Griffis Sculpture Park: ...a "community of pods" where visitors climbing on, over and through them will help the students test the functionality of their designs. [images]- University at Buffalo News

Traditional Artistry, Revamped in Contemporary Architecture: Marc Kristal's "Re:Crafted: Interpretations of Craft in Contemporary Architecture and Interiors" features 25 architectural projects that challenge the traditional view of craft...have incorporated the "personal touch" in a modern way. -- Faulders Studio; Wheeler Kearns; Lewis.Tsurumaki.Lewis (LTL); Olson Kundig Architects; Studio Metasus/Peter Lynch (Studio Them)/Ahlaiya Yung; Atelier D'Architecture King Kong; Shim-Sutcliffe; Rick Jordan; Moorhead & Moorhead; Daly Genik; Architecture Research Office (ARO) [slide show essay]- Fast Company

"Roadside America": 11 Relics of the Lost Highway: John Margolies...collects nearly 400 photographs of this vanishing vision of over-the-top architecture, automotive freedom and the American dream. [slide show]- Fast Company

Disappearing Act: North Carolina Museum of Art West Building by Thomas Phifer and Partners and Pearce Brinkley Cease + Lee: A new museum building strives to nearly disappear, deferring to the beauty of the artworks and the surrounding landscape. By Lisa Delgado- ArchNewsNow



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